

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS COLOMBO 001140

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA/INS, S/ES-CR, S/ES-O

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL CE

SUBJECT: Message from Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lakshman Kadirgamar to Secretary Colin Powell

¶1. Mission received a letter from Minister of Foreign Affairs Lakshman Kadirgamar to Secretary of State Colin Powell, dated July 5, 2004. The text of the message is contained below. A copy is being sent by fax to SA/INS with the original to follow via pouch.

¶2. Accompanying Kadirgamar's letter was a letter from Secretary Powell to the FM regarding the ASEAN Regional

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Forum (ARF) that had been faxed on July 2, 2004 from Sri Lankan Ambassador Subasinghe to Kadirgamar. Kadirgamar references the letter from Secretary Powell in his own letter. Mission, however, has not seen a copy of the Secretary's letter before now.

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¶3. The text of FM Kadirgamar's letter follows:

Begin text:

July 5, 2004

Honourable Colin L. Powell
US Secretary of State

Dear Secretary Powell

First let me tell you that it was indeed a great pleasure to meet you again in Washington last May. I would like to thank you and the officials of the State Department for arranging for me, together with our Embassy, a very comprehensive and productive programme of events.

I would like to take this opportunity of formally extending to you, also on behalf of President Kumaratunga, a most cordial invitation to visit Sri Lanka as a guest of the Government. You will recall that when I extended this invitation to you orally at the end of our recent meeting in Washington you responded in the affirmative. You will receive a warm welcome in Sri Lanka. Your name is very well known here and you have won a great deal of respect and admiration for the way in which you have handled an extremely difficult and delicate task in the last few years. Moreover, that grand, centuries old lady ?he banyan tree ?t President's House awaits your visit. She is acquiring new admirers all the time!

I would suggest that your officials and ours at the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Washington be in touch on the question of suitable dates. Perhaps, when you next visit our region you could include a stop in Sri Lanka. I would also suggest that your visit should be so planned as to allow you time to see at least some of the sites, both scenic and historical, for which Sri Lanka is famous.

Let me also say, once more, that under your stewardship the State Department has played a very supportive and constructive role, which is greatly appreciated by the government and people of Sri Lanka, with regard to the security of Sri Lanka and the negotiation of a lasting settlement of the ethnic question that has bedeviled us for some decades.

Finally, I refer to your letter of the 2nd instant pledging the support of the United States for the admission of Sri Lanka to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). This is an encouraging development for which I thank you very much indeed on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka.

With very best wishes
Sincerely

Lakshman Kadirgamar, PC MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs

End text.

